



# LOCAL 478 • CONNECTICUT

## INTERNATIONAL UNION OF OPERATING ENGINEERS

1965 Dixwell Avenue • Hamden, Connecticut 06514

### Testimony Offered by Operating Engineers, Local 478 in Opposition to SB 396 An Act Concerning a Fast Track for Apprenticeships

Good morning Senator Hartley, Representative Perone and distinguished members of the Commerce Committee. My name is John Daddona I'm the Apprenticeship Coordinator with the Operating Engineers Local 478 - representing 3000 Equipment Operators in Connecticut. I appear before you today to respectfully offer the following comments for your consideration and to urge your opposition to SB 396 – An Act Concerning a Fast Track for Apprenticeships.

The work conducted by Operating Engineers is, by its very nature, extremely dangerous and requires a high level of training and skill. We understand SB 396 to diminish the time requirements for the duration of apprenticeships - by being allowed to count prior work experience. There may be some types of work where such a reduction in apprenticeship hours might be appropriate, but given the complexity of the work performed by Operating Engineers, we respectfully suggest that the committee consider narrowing the scope of SB 396 so as not to affect apprenticeships for heavy equipment operators.

Please consider the following:

- Heavy equipment operators work in a safety sensitive industry (learning good safety practices should be taught by structured programs with a proven track record of teaching safety)
- Given the dangerous nature of the work, apprentices may hurt themselves or co-workers
- Additionally, apprentices have the potential to put the public at risk for harm
- Trusting others have taught this safety aspect is not wise in our industry
- Productivity (essential in our industry) production should be taught by structured programs (with a proven track record in our industry)
- How will credits be assessed from one program to another to ensure fairness and equity?
- Construction trades require multiple assessments to gauge apprenticeship achievements – how could that be handled under this new framework?

For the foregoing reasons I urge your opposition to SB 396. Thank you for your consideration.